United Nations E/CN.5/2001/NGO/1

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
11 January 2001

Original: English

Commission for Social Development
Thirty-ninth session
13-23 February 2001
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development

Statement submitted by Caritas Internationalis, International Council on Social Welfare, and International Movement ATD Fourth World, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; Child Welfare League of America, International Association of Schools of Social Work, International Federation for Home Economics, International Federation of Social Workers, and Pax Christi International, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; Armenian Relief Society, a non-governmental organization on the Roster of the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* * *

* E/CN.5/2001/1.

01-21770 (E) 230101

The family is the basic unit of society. It is through the family that economic, social and spiritual values are learned. As we enter the twenty-first century and member States and non-governmental organizations meet at the session of the Commission for Social Development this year, we — as members of the NGO Committee on the Family-NY — would like to call attention to issues of concern to the family.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, in Article 25:

> "(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
>
> "(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection."

These human rights are as much a part of the issues for families around the world today as when they were originally formulated in 1948.

We ask the Commission and the member States to recognize and address the needs of families in the following ways:

(a) Accelerate the many efforts already under way to hasten the eradication of poverty;

(b) Increase the focus on education for all family members, with particular emphasis on the girl-child and women;

(c) Establish support for families, especially mothers and children, who have suffered displacement due to armed conflict;

(d) Recognize the value, and promote the unique skills of, elderly family members;

(e) Increase efforts to provide for the social and economic needs of children without families or separated from their families.

We, the signatory non-governmental organizations, cannot emphasize enough the value of families in this new millennium as a key towards building a world where human development and human security are ensured, where all people are free from want and fear.